

Reading homework 3 – Blue Beard by Charles Perrault

Blue Beard (French: *Barbe bleue*) is a French folktale, the most famous surviving version was written by Charles Perrault in Paris in 1697. This is the first second part of the story. Read the text and answer the questions set by your teacher on Google Classroom. **You will find some vocabulary help at the bottom of the text to help you if you need it.**

...In the first part of the story Blue Beard's young bride had ignored his instructions and used the small key to open a forbidden room. In there she found the bodies of his previous wives. The key turned out to be cursed as it has since been covered with blood which cannot be cleaned...

Blue Beard returned from his journey that very evening. He had received some letters on the way, he said, from which he learned that the business upon which he had set forth had just been concluded to his satisfaction. His wife did everything she could to make it appear that she was delighted by his speedy return.

On the morrow he demanded the keys. She gave them to him, but with so trembling a hand that he guessed at once what had happened.

'How comes it,' he said to her, 'that the key of the little room is not with the others?'

'-I must have left it upstairs upon my table,' she said.

'Do not fail to bring it to me presently,' said Blue Beard.

After several delays the key had to be brought. Blue Beard examined it, and addressed his wife.

'Why is there blood on this key?'

'-I do not know at all,' replied the poor woman, paler than death.

'You do not know at all?' exclaimed Blue Beard; 'I know well enough. You wanted to enter the little room! Well, madam, enter it you shall—you shall go and take your place among the ladies you have seen there.'

She threw herself at her husband's feet, asking his pardon with tears, and with all the signs of a true **repentance** for her disobedience. She would have softened a rock, in her beauty and distress, but Blue Beard had a heart harder than any stone.

'You must die, madam,' he said; 'and at once.'

'Since I must die,' she replied, gazing at him with eyes that were wet with tears, 'give me a little time to say my prayers.'

'I give you one quarter of an hour,' replied Blue Beard, 'but not a moment longer.'



Bluebeard

When the poor girl was alone, she called her sister to her and said: Sister Anne—for that was her name—'go up, I **implore** you, to the top of the tower, and see if my brothers are not approaching. They promised that they would come and visit me to-day. If you see them, make signs to them to **hasten**.'

Sister Anne went up to the top of the tower, and the poor unhappy girl cried out to her from time to time:

'Anne, Sister Anne, do you see nothing coming?'

And Sister Anne replied: 'I see **nought** but dust in the sun and the green grass growing.'

Presently Blue Beard, grasping a great **cutlass**, cried out at the top of his voice: 'Come down quickly, or I shall come upstairs myself.'

'Oh please, one moment more,' called out his wife. And at the same moment she cried in a whisper: 'Anne, Sister Anne, do you see nothing coming?'

'I see nought but dust in the sun and the green grass growing.'

'Come down at once, I say,' shouted Blue Beard, 'or I will come upstairs myself.'

'I am coming,' replied his wife. Then she called: 'Anne, Sister Anne, do you see nothing coming?'

'I see,' replied Sister Anne, 'a great cloud of dust which comes this way.'

'Is it my brothers?'

'**Alas**, sister, no; it is but a flock of sheep.'

'Do you refuse to come down?' roared Blue Beard.

'One little moment more,' exclaimed his wife. Once more she cried: 'Anne, Sister Anne, do you see nothing coming?'

'I see,' replied her sister, 'two horsemen who come this way, but they are as yet a long way off.... Heaven be praised,' she exclaimed a moment later, 'they are my brothers.... I am signalling to them all I can to hasten.'

Blue Beard **let forth so mighty a shout** that the whole house shook. The poor wife went down and **cast** herself at his feet, all **dishevelled** and in tears.

'That **avails** you nothing,' said Blue Beard; 'you must die.' Seizing her by the hair with one hand, and with the other brandishing the cutlass **aloft**, he made as if to cut off her head.

The poor woman, turning towards him and fixing a dying gaze upon him, begged for a brief moment in which to collect her thoughts.

'No! no!' he cried; 'commend your soul to Heaven.' And raising his arm——

At this very moment there came so loud a knocking at the gate that Blue Beard stopped short.

The gate was opened, and two horsemen dashed in, who drew their swords and rode straight at Blue Beard. The latter recognised them as the brothers of his wife—one of them a **dragoon**, and the other a **musketeer**—and fled instantly in an effort to escape. But the two brothers were so close upon him that they caught him **ere** he could gain the first flight of steps. They plunged their swords through his body and left him dead. The poor woman was nearly as dead as her husband, and had not the strength to rise and embrace her brothers.



It was found that Blue Beard had no heirs, and that consequently his wife became mistress of all his wealth. She devoted a portion to arranging a marriage between her sister Anne and a young gentleman with whom the latter had been for some time in love, while another portion purchased a captain's commission for each of her brothers. The rest formed a dowry for her own marriage with a very worthy man, who banished from her mind all memory of the evil days she had spent with Blue Beard.

Vocabulary help

On the morrow: the following day.

Repentance: sincere regret or remorse.

Implore: beg someone earnestly or desperately to do something.

Hasten: be quick to do something, hurry.

Nought: nothing.

Cutlass: a short sword with a slightly curved blade, formerly used by sailors.

Alas: an exclamations: used to express grief, pity, or concern.

Let forth so mighty a shout: let out a scream.

Dishevel: to make a person's hair or clothes untidy.

Avails: help or benefit.

Aloft: up in or into the air; overhead.

Dragoon: a member of any of several cavalry regiments in the British army.

Musketeer: a soldier armed with a musket.

Ere: before (in time), earlier than.

Link to Google forms quiz-

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1qN8VvIaeUDmqZDvGOgkNNqkonKHnxEvh7vzIHKjygE/edit?usp=sharing>